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Music Studio Policies

The Voice Studio and

Piano Division

Welcome to my music studio. I offer you a professional lesson at competitive prices. By studying with me you will learn proper technique for your instrument/voice, appropriate musical literature, and have opportunities for performance. You will also learn a discipline unlike any other. Music is “food for the brain” and develops specific motor skills. However, it takes structure and stick-to-it-tive-ness in order to achieve proficiency.

The Lesson

Your lesson will be either 30, 45 or 55 minutes. Young people under age 16 will usually take a 30 minute lesson. If you are a 5-6 year-old piano student you will take a 20 minute lesson. However, if the student is becoming advanced a longer lesson time will be suggested. Youth over 16 and adults are encouraged to take a 45 or 55 minute lesson. The lesson is comprised of technical exercises and musical literature. The purpose is to prepare the student physically to learn music literature and to take it to the level of performance. As the student becomes more advanced they will be expected to take on more advanced music, and so on as they climb the ladder of proficiency. *And please*, when the teacher asks you to do something at your lesson (exercise, finger-pattern, etc.), please do as the teacher asks. Being belligerent, argumentative and wanting to “do it *your way*” get us nowhere. You can experiment at home during your own private practice period. In fact, it is encouraged! But during the lesson, the teacher asks certain things of you in order to explore more ways to grow and understand.

Lesson Scheduling

Lessons are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time between me and the student. Lessons are grouped into what is called “modules.” September through January is the Fall/Winter Module. February through June is the Winter/Spring Module. July and August are their own Module. It is *not* advisable to take the summer off completely from studying. Taking off for vacations is fine. Study during the summer is more relaxed and also prevents us from spending too much time catching up in the fall!

Lesson Fees

Fees are paid monthly. I figure the number of lessons in a Module, excluding holidays. I multiply that number by the lesson fee and divide by the 5 months. Since I am teaching on someone else’s turf, I have to pay rent-per-student for this privilege. I tack on an extra \$10 to help pay that rent. Poof...your monthly payment! Charging by the “module” is easier for the student to remember the monthly fee due at the first lesson of the month...mark it on the calendar! And I know what my music income is for the month. Ask anyone you know who works for a living how they would feel about a “fluctuating monthly income” and you have the answer. However, due to vacations in July and August we charge only for the lessons taken. *Note*...another casualty of taking the summer off completely may result in losing your lesson time, as income necessities require me to fill vacancies quickly.

Module monthly fees: \$125 (*30-min. lesson*); \$172 (*45-min. lesson*); \$190 (*55-60 min. lesson*).

Missing a Lesson

Unless you are legitimately ill, missing your music lesson is not advisable. You only see me one day per week. That's 6 days *without* me! And you only spend anywhere from 30 to 55 minutes with me. So you can see what we need to cover in that very small window of time. The remainder of the week you need to practice the lesson you learned on your lesson day, and become proficient at that work so we can advance to new material at your next lesson. So please make every effort to attend your lesson. Missing lessons sets us back. *Excessive absences may also result in your being dropped from my schedule.*

Makeup Lessons

If you need to miss a lesson please let me know 24 hours in advance in order to get a makeup lesson. Makeup lessons are scheduled at a mutually convenient time within the same module. Or if scheduling permits, an extra 15 minutes may be tacked on to the regular lesson until the entire missed lesson has been made up. In the event lessons are cancelled due to inclement weather, makeup lessons will be offered to each student. The same holds true if I need to cancel a day due to illness or another unforeseeable circumstance. *Lessons cancelled last minute by you will not be made up.*

Home Practice

The key to success when taking private music lessons is the practice. Practice *can be fun* when you learn the lesson material and can perform it satisfactorily. But it is also work that needs to be done. It is expected that the student will practice at least 5 days per week besides the lesson day. The practice period should be at least as long as the lesson time in order to sufficiently learn the material covered at the lesson, and be prepared to move on at the next lesson. Parents of young students need to be vigilant when their child is practicing to make sure the music sounds "like music" and not "chopped liver." The music should also be getting better and easier to listen to as the week progresses. If this isn't happening then it would behoove the parent to sit in on the next lesson to see exactly what their child is learning and how they are expected to practice during the week. *If any student is bored while practicing or just not learning the literature, it is either because the student isn't practicing enough or I am not assigning you challenging enough music.*

Performances

All students are expected to take part in recitals during the year. Currently there is an annual recital but plans are in the works to have a Fall and Spring recital. This gives the student (*and me*) a goal to work toward. Learning a piece of music to perform is the highest level of proficiency attainable. You are now ready to present your music for others. There's no better achievement or goal. All your hard work has now paid off. It is said there are 1,000 hours of practice for one hour of performance. And it's all worth it in the end! It also gives me valuable insight as I watch you perform your music. I love it!

A note on performances...if you are slated to play on the recital you must follow through unless an emergency arises. This is important. You've worked hard for this! Pulling out is like leaving a class without taking your final exam.

Other Stuff

Lesson Sheets

I provide a LESSON SHEET for each student at each lesson. This sheet has the assignment for the week. This sheet **MUST** be brought back to each lesson along with your music books. Please do yourself the favor of buying a totebag for your musical materials, and keeping **ALL** of them in it! Make sure you know where it is so that you do not show up for your lesson without your music. If you do not bring your music I can improvise for a lesson, but it does put us back a week when I have to get creative and not follow your regular lesson plan. I do not stock multiple copies of music anywhere. It is not practical for me since I travel to several places to teach. *So please bring all of your musical materials with you to each lesson.*

Purchasing Music

There's no way around this one. You must invest in music if you are going to study it. We all have to. No one is exempt. As the need arises you will be asked to purchase the next "level" of music to help you move forward and become more proficient. I may order this for you or direct you to a particular music store to purchase yourself. Music stores do help out music teachers by putting music aside for students. However, it is expected that you pick up the music promptly so that we keep our store privileges. Photocopying music is illegal unless the music is obsolete. But there is plenty of current music available for study without my having to use and photocopy music from the 1600s which is no longer in print.

Metronomes

What a great idea! Everyone needs to own one. It helps any musician perform music not only at the tempo suggested by the composer but also to keep the performer cognizant of keeping a steady tempo as well. This is a skill that must be learned. A metronome is a must.

Recording Devices

Voice students are asked to bring a small tape recorder to each lesson. We record the lesson and the student uses this to practice during the week. I also record songs that the student is expected to learn.

Keyboards

If you have a keyboard at home and study piano with me, this keyboard must be almost as big as a piano which has 88 keys. Some keyboards have 60-some keys and that is ok. Also, please note that a keyboard "touch" is not the same weight as a "piano touch." If you have a small keyboard and are expecting to learn real music on it, you probably won't be learning music from me.

Musical Mindset

Please try your best to arrive at your lesson on time. And please try to mentally prepare for your lesson, which means avoiding strenuous activities right before you arrive. Students need to focus a few minutes before a lesson or home practice period. This is a time for challenge, exploration and creativity! A student cannot have a good lesson if they are tired or running in late and gasping for air. We only have that little bit of time together weekly so we both want to make it as productive as possible.

Musical Activities

Do it! Go to the Boston Symphony or the Boston Pops. Log onto the BSO website to see what concerts are available. Attend local recitals by local artists. These are advertised in the local papers. Get out and hear professional musicians perform. Listen to recordings or WCRB radio. Unglue yourself from the modern pop-culture and embrace some serious, sophisticated music expertly and passionately performed. The more you do this the more "musical" you will become. You will see improvement in your own study and performance.

Monthly Payment

Please pay your monthly fee at the first lesson of the month. We all have bills to pay so enough said. *Financial differences may mean being dropped from my schedule.* If you do forget, my address is at the top of these policies so you can put the check in the mail immediately.

Communication

Please provide me with the *best* way to contact you so that I know I will reach you and get a response if I need one; either by phone or email or both. You will also get *all* of my contact information.

A Note on Sports and Other Activities

Please. Do not schedule a new activity on your lesson day and announce to me afterwards that you want to change your lesson day/time. I have a tight schedule. There are others involved in your request to change. For some reason music lessons have been relegated to the back burner behind every other activity. Please think seriously before signing up your child or yourself for music lessons. If you are over-involved this may not be the time to study music.

Hygiene and Attire

Cleanliness, etc.

Cleanliness at your lesson is a must. If you study piano make sure you come with clean hands. Voice students should not eat for about one hour before having a lesson. Gum-chewing and sucking on candy is not allowed during *any* lesson.

Manners

I am your teacher and I do demand some respect. If you are under the age of 21, please address me as Miss Evelyn. Also, to the younger students, if you feel a tantrum coming on, please defer having it until *after* the music lesson.

Clothing

After much discussion amongst various teacher friends and colleagues, we decided it's time to make a statement regarding attire. Summer months are especially challenging. We request that *all* students adhere to these principles and dress appropriately for an appointment with a professional person.

- No beach attire is acceptable.
- No baseball or winter hats during a lesson. Take them off.
- No extreme short shorts or skirts, or revealing clothing. A little modesty is appreciated.
- Voice students, come dressed in loose fitting clothes as we are working with your body to produce tone and need to be able to move.
- Mothers, if your sweet young girl is now growing into a sweet young lady and needs "training support," please make sure she gets it and *wears* it to her lesson. Please do not send your budding young lady out in a manner that you yourself would not leave the house.
- No bare feet at a lesson. Also, if a piano student is working on music that requires pedal, real shoes with a sole must be worn in order to provide enough foot support.
- During winter months when there is snow on the ground, please bring a change of shoe if you are working on piano pedal. There's nothing worse than a puddle under the damper pedal when another student sits down for their lesson.

Recital Attire and Manner

- The last time I saw Luciano Pavarotti ("Big Luciano") walk on stage and give a recital, he was wearing a tuxedo (tails) and black patent leather shoes, and carrying his trademark white handkerchief. His piano accompanist was also wearing a tux and black patent leather shoes. They exuded confidence and mastery! We don't ask that you wear tuxedos and evening gowns at your recital and pretend you are something you're not, but we do ask that you come in your "Sunday best" which includes a bit of dressing up and real shoes. This is performance! Your teacher will advise you on appropriate attire as we get closer to the recital itself.

And as my dear friend Dr. Fred always says...

The worst impediment to success is setting mediocre goals and achieving them.

So reach for the stars as you study music. You never know what you just might achieve!